Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

SECRET

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SO, US, MASS, PBOR

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR,
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FEBRUARY 22

1. SUMMARY: THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR MET WITH THE SECRETARY TO CONVEY PRESIDENT SIAD'S REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS AND/OR APROVAL FOR A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. THE ALTERNATIVE, IF NO EFFECTIVE US SUPPORT WERE PROVIDED, WOULD BE THE REPLACEMENT OF SIAD BY A GOVERNMENT

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WILLING TO NEGOTIATE A PEACE WITH THE SOVIETS. THE AMBAS-
SADOR ALSO REVEALED THAT SIAD WAS REQUESTING AN IMMEDIATE
OAU MEETING ON THE HORN. END SUMMARY.

2. THIS TELEGRAM IS BASED ON AN UNCLEARED MEMCON AND IS
SUBJECT TO REVISION. THE SECRETARY RECEIVED SOMALI
AMBASSADOR ADDOU ON FEBRUARY 22 TO HEAR MESSAGE THE
AMBASSADOR HAD BROUGHT FROM PRESIDENT SIAD. ADDOU BEGAN
BY SAYING THAT THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA WAS DESPERATE
AND IF THERE WERE NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE VERY SHORT TERM
WE WOULD SEE THE FALL OF THE SIAD GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH
THE ETHIOPIAN ADVANCE HAD BEEN CHECKED MOMENTARILY, THE
ARMY LEADERS WERE AWARE THAT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT WESTERN
SUPPORT THEY COULD NOT HOLD BACK AN ETHIOPIAN ATTACK.

THEREFORE MANY OF THEM WERE TURNING ON PRESIDENT SIAD,
WHO, THEY CLAIMED, HAD BROUGHT SOMALIA TO A POINT AT
WHICH THERE WAS NO EFFECTIVE HELP FROM THE UNITED
STATES AND THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN REJECTED. AT THE
RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING MANY HAD INSISTED
THAT THE ONLY SALVATION FOR THE COUNTRY LAY IN DIA-
LOGUE WITH THE SOVIETS. SIAD REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT
ONE WHO COULD HOLD AN EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE
SOVIETS, AND THAT IF THE SITUATION REQUIRED IT, HE
WOULD RESIGN THE PRESIDENCY.

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3. ADDOU INSISTED THAT SIAD COULD NOT CONTAIN THE
PRESSURE FROM THE MILITARY IF THERE WERE NO POSITIVE
RESPONSE FROM THE UNITED STATES. THE SOMALIS HAD
RECEIVED WORD FROM MINORITY MEMBERS OF THE DIRG WHO
URGED THE SOMALIS NOT TO BELIEVE ANY PROMISES EITHER
OF MENGISTU OR OF THE SOVIETS, BOTH OF WHOM INTENDED
TO INVADE SOMALIA AND CRUSH THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT AND
ESTABLISH REGIONAL SOCIALIST UNITY WHICH HAD BEEN THE
SOVIET UNION'S EARLIER PROPOSAL TO SOLVE THE CONFLICTS
IN THE HORN. GIVEN THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS NOT EASY AT THE PRESENT
TIME, ADDOU SUGGESTED THAT SIAD BE INVITED TO WASHING-
TON MEET THE SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT CARTER. THIS
MIGHT SIGNAL SUFFICIENT POLITICAL SUPPORT TO ALLOW
HIM TO MAINTAIN HIS POSITION. ADDOU INSISTED THAT THE
SECRETARY'S ANSWER WOULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
STABILITY AND INSTABILITY IN SOMALIA.

4. WHEN ASKED BY THE SECRETARY TO CLARIFY HIS REQUEST,
ADDOU SAID THAT IF THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT PROVIDE
MILITARY ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY, SIAD WISHED TO KNOW
WHETHER WE WOULD PERMIT THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS.

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FRIENDLY STATES WERE READY TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE ARMS--TANKS, ARTILLERY, AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT PIECES, BUT WHAT THE COUNTRIES COULD PROVIDE WITHOUT US PERMISSION COULD NOT HALT THE THE ETHIOPIAN ADVANCE. WHEN ASKED BY THE SECRETARY WHETHER THE SOMALIS WERE REQUESTING THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS AFTER A STATEMENT OF WILLING-NESS TO WITHDRAFROM THE OGADEN, OR AFTER WITHDRAWING FROM THE OGADEH, ADDOU REPLIED THAT IF THE SOMALIS HAD SUFFICIENT MORAL STRENGTH, PROVIDED BY US MILITARY SUPPORT OR THAT OF IRAN, THEY COULD THEN GO TO THE TABLE AND NEGOTIATE A WITHDRAWAL. AT THE SAME TIME THEY COULD NEGOTIATE A FORMULA FOR THE OGADENI INHABITANTS. THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT WHAT THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT WAS ASKING US TO DO WAS REVERSE OUR

POSITION THAT WE WOULD NOT SUPPLY ARMS SO LONG AS TROOPS WERE IN THE OGADEN, AND THAT THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS WERE POLITICALLY THE EQUIVALENT OF DIRECT PROVISION OF ARMS. ONE STILL HAD TO GO TO CONGRESS. ADDOU REPLIED THAT WE WERE FACED WITH THE COLLAPSE OF A REGIME THAT HAD OPPOSED THE SOVIET DESIGN; IN THIS PLIGHT, WHAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD DECIDE WOULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY, LIFE OR DEATH.

5. IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S QUESTION, ADDOU CONFIRMED THAT SIAD WISHED TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES. SUCH A VISIT WOULD GIVE HIM THE ASSURANCE THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN DESERTED AND WOULD PUT HIM IN A STRONGER BARGAINING POSITION. ADDOU UNDERSTOOD THAT THE IDEA OF A VISIT WOULD BE SUPPORTED KING KHALID OR PRINCE FAHAD. IN SUMMATION, SIAD WAS ASKING FOR THIRD COUNTRY TRANS-FERS WITHOUT A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN AND/OR A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. WHEN ASKED IF ANY THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO WITHDRAWAL TO SOMALI TERRI-TORIES TO DEFEND SOMALIA'S VITAL INTERESTS, ADDOU REPLIED THAT THE GSDR WOULD BE IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL POSITION TO DO SO IF THE MIILITARY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES WERE PROVIDED. HE NOTED THAT SOMALIA HAD ALSO ASKED FOR WITHDRAWAL OF "EXTERNAL FORCES" (MEANING THE SOVIET, CUBAN AND SOUTH YEMENI FORCES) FROM THE OGADEN AREA AND WISHED THE UNITED STATES SUPPORT IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

6. ADDOU CONFIRMED THAT MINISTER KASSIM HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO LAGOS, ASKING THAT IN VIEW OF LACK OF PROGRESS MADE BY THE OAU MEDIATION COMMITTEE, OBASANJO SHOULD ASK BONGO TO CALL AN EMERGENCY OAU MEETING,

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EITHER AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL OR AT THE SUMMIT TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF THE HORN. ADDOU SAID THAT THE SOMALI DELEGATION MIGHT ALSO RAISE THE PROBLEM OF THE HORN AT THE TRIPOLI OAU MEETING, BUT THE PRIMARY EMPHASIS WAS ON THE OBASANJO MISSION. ADDOU, WHILE INSISTING THAT THE SOMALIS WERE READY TO NEGOTIATE IN LAGOS OR ANYWHERE ELSE, COULD NOT UNEQUIVOCABLY CONFIRM THAT THE LAGOS DELEGATION WAS PREPARD TO TALK TO ETHIOPIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN LAGOS UNDER OBASANJO'S AUSPICES.

7. SECRETARY VANCE INFORMED ADDOU THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS THE HORN WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ON FEBRUARY 23 AND HOPED TO HAVE A REPLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR SHORTLY THEREAFTER. VANCE

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